

[Calvin Roberson]

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Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Range-lore,

FEC written by Elizabeth

Doyle, from Continuity submitted

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Maverick, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Born in Milam County in 1884, Calvin Roberson moved from there to the Indian Territory when only five years of age. In 1905 his parents brought their family to Runnels County where they made their future home. Most of Mr. Roberson's life has been spent on the ranch but he has not made an active hand for the last several years, having served as night watchman in Ballinger since leaving the ranch and is a candidate for sheriff of Runnels County in the 1938 election.

"I was only fifteen years of age," says Mr. Roberson, "when my work as a cowhand began. I went with my uncle to the Indian Territory in 1889 and went to work on the Todd ranch near Chickasha. I was just a general cowhand helping with the branding or what ever come up to be done. Rustlers gave us our worst trouble, stealing the cattle and burning the brands. Any cattle found without brands were taken by them and given their own brand.

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C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 A few people believed that the Indians were doing this but most of the settlers knew that the worst Indians of that section were a credit to the class of rustlers that caused so much trouble among the cowmen there. The Indians that we knew were fairly well civilized and seemed to want to be friendly. I was there six years working on the same ranch the whole time and it was a tough place alright but the gamblers and desperadoes who came through the country crooking every one they could was what made it so tough. The Indians were easier swindled out of their cattle than the white men were and that was one cause of the rough element coming to the Territory in such great numbers.

“The one woman cook I knew while I worked there was said to be part Indian and was known to everyone as “Flapjack Sally”. She was some bean slinger and wasn't afraid of hard work. I have heard that she could dress a wound or set a broken bone as well as any M. D. She was a great story teller and the Indian stories she could tell would make the hair rise up on a feller's head and stay up. Her skill with cards made her a match for any gambler that came her way. Gambling was her hobby and no tin horn gambler ever beat her out of anything.

“Of course the tenderfoot didn't make good hands at first and they didn't fail to suffer the consequences. They couldn't ride much and were always put on the worst horses. 3 Yellowjackets were put in their beds and cockleburs in their boots. They would leg 'em, get 'em drunk and duck 'em but never really hurt 'em. That was their idea of fun and if a guy come through without too much kickin' he was called good and soon became one of the boys.

“Speakin' of ridin', I knew some good ones, in fact they had to be good to make the grade them days, but the best I ever knew was old Booger Red. He rode 'em all with an ease that I never saw equaled.

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"My next work was for Bob Hewitt on the March Ranch in Coke County. I worked there a number of years and it was one of the biggest outfits in this part of the country. The day of big cattle drives were over by that time as most of the cattle were shipped from San Angelo to northern markets. Our drives to San Angelo was about all the drivin' we did then. One spring after we'd had our general roundup and cut out the ones we were going to drive to market and was holdin' them in a ravine, a storm come up just after dark and threw cows, punchers, and all into a panic and the cattle scattered all over the ranch in spite of all we could do. We lost the whole dad blame mess of them and had our roundin' up and cuttin' all to do over again.

"I guess my ranch days are over but Boy, how I enjoyed them good old days. The old time dances and fiddle times won't ever be beat for the cowpunchers. Our work was hard but we was young and strong, had plenty to eat and didn't 4 know what it was to worry, so I believe most of [?] old boys would say with me, 'Them was the good old days.!' Range-lore

Annie McAulay

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Calvin Roberson, Ballinger, Texas, interviewed, February 18, 1938. 1 Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

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COWBOY LORE

CALVIN ROBERSON was born in Milam county in 1884. He moved from there to The Indian Territory in 1889. He with his parents, moved to Runnels County in 1905. Since that time most of his life has been spent in that county. He was married to Miss Maude McAulay in 1906. There were seven children in the family.

Mr. Roberson says, "I began riding and working cattle when only fifteen years of age. I went with an uncle from Milam county to The Commanche Territory in Oklahoma in 1889. I went to work as a range hand on the Todd Ranch near Chickasee. I worked as a general cowhand. Helped with branding or whatever work there was to do on a ranch.

I remember we had quite a bit of trouble with rustlers. They'd steal the cattle outright sometimes, changing the brand. And if they found cows or calves without brands, they'd brand those of course. Some folks thought it was the Indians but most didn't. The Indians seemed pretty friendly and civized in them parts at that time.

I worked in The Territory for about six years. Sure was a pretty tough country sometimes then. Not so thickly settled where I was at that time, except for the Indians. Quite a few gamblers came through and they'd sometimes crook the Indians out of cash or cattle and so on. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 I knew one woman cook in the territory. They said she was part Indian. But she was a good cook and didn't mind hard work. She cooked on -I believe it was The Old Omega Ranch not so many miles from where I worked. She was married but was known by everyone as flapjack Sally. They say she could set a broken bone or dress a wound as good as any M. D. She was shore some talker as well ass a hashslinger. She could tell Indian and other stories that would make the hair rise on a fellers head and stay that way. I never saw her play but they say she was pretty slick with cards. She never gambled for much, but it was her hobby and no tinhorn gambler or roving cowboy ever beat her out of anything.

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They'd certainly razz the tenderfoot in them parts. They wasn't usually good hands at first. Couldn't ride much and couldn't stand some of the hardships. The boys would make it pretty tough for them. Work them into riding the toughest horses, put yellow jackets in their bunks, cockleburs in their boots, leg 'em, get 'em drunk That their Idea of fun. Never really hurt 'em you might say.

I knew some pretty good riders. In fact in the early days they all had to be good riders. I reckon Old Booger Red was the best Bronc rider I ever knew.

Soon after I moved to Runnels county in 1905, I moved to The Collins Ranch in Coke county. I only lived there a short time until I went to work for Bob Hewitt, On The March Ranch, [?] in Coke county. I worked on that ranch for a number of 3 It was one of the biggest outfits in this part of the country. There was some pretty good riders with that outfit too. They didn't make any long cattle drives then. Most of the cattle were driven to San Angelo and shipped to northern markets from there.

I remember one spring we'd had our general round up; we had cut the cattle we were going to drive to market from the general herd and was holding them in a ravine on the ranch. A storm came up the night before the drive, and threw them into a panic-and us too- In spite of all we could do they got away from us and scattered all over that ranch. We lost whole dadblame business of 'em and had our job of roundin up and cutting them out do all over again.

I haven't worked on a ranch in a good many years, but we use to have some good times. Boy how I liked them ole time dances and fiddle tunes. Our work was usually hard but what of it. We were young and strong. Had plenty to eat and never worried. Them was good old days.

Mr. Roberson has served as night watchman in Ballinger for a good long time. He is a canidate for sheriff of Runnels county in 1938 election. Bibliography.

Library of Congress

Calvin Roberson, Ballinger Texas. Early settler in Runnels Co. Interviewed Feb. 18, 1938.